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REMARKS

Introduction

A response to the final office action issued June 27, 2006 accompanied by a request for a one-month extension of time was filed on September 29, 2006. An Advisory Action was issued on October 23, 2006.

The Cited References Do Not Describe the Invention of Claim 1

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner maintained the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 4,715,090 to Morris ("Morris") in view of DE 1,584,006 ("DE '006). In particular, the Examiner conceded that the combination of Morris and DE '006 results in a hinge assembly that allows for some play, but alleged that a small amount of free play does not result in a moveable or removable mount.

The hinge assembly recited by Claim 1 requires:

- hinge pin retention means associated with the other hinge leaf for preventing axial withdrawal of the hinge pin therefrom, and
- hinge pin engagement means . . . including a spherical surface of a given radius seated in an annular groove of a curved section, the curved section having a radius of curvature the same as said given radius so as to permit rotation of the hinge pin but prevent any axial movement of the hinge pin relative to said other hinge leaf (emphasis added).

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Preventing axial withdrawal of the hinge pin prevents the separation of one hinge leaf from the other hinge leaf, which prevents, for example, the separation of a vehicle door from a vehicle chassis. Preventing any axial movement of the hinge pin relative to the other hinge leaf eliminates free play between the hinge leaves. It is desirable to eliminate free play between the hinge leaves since free play allows the leaves to knock against one another, which increases wear and tear and generates noise. Increased wear and tear increases the likelihood of component failure and noise gives the impression of poor quality. Accordingly, eliminating free play between the hinge leaves increases the perceived quality of a vehicle and reduces the likelihood of component failure.

Morris describes a locking screw 22, which locks the second hinge leaf (14) to the hinge pin (3). The locking screw inhibits any rotation of the hinge pin relative to the second hinge leaf. This arrangement merely prevents axial withdrawal of the hinge pin from the second hinge leaf. Morris describes two bushes which allow rotation of the hinge pin. As conceded by the Examiner the bushes allow for some free play, *i.e.* axial movement, between the hinge pin and the first hinge leaf (1). Accordingly, Morris does not disclose or suggest a hinge pin engagement means that permits rotation of the hinge pin while preventing any axial movement of the hinge pin relative to the hinge leaf. Since Morris allows free play, it is not concerned with eliminating noise or reducing wear and tear, as is the claimed invention.

The Examiner admitted that Morris does not describe that the engagement means includes a spherical surface of a given radius seated in an annular groove of a curved section, the curved section having a radius of curvature the same as said given radius so as to

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permit rotation of the hinge pin but prevent any axial movement of the hinge pin relative to said other hinge leaf. However, the Examiner alleged that DE '006 describes these elements and that it would have been obvious to combine Morris and DE '006 for the purpose of providing alternative means of achieving a desired axial locking and unlocking function. The abstract of DE '006 describes that the hinge assembly is designed so that the two leaves can be decoupled without the hinge pin falling out. The assembled leaves are shown in Figure 1 which illustrates that the spherical surface 21 is seated in groove 14. Figure 2 illustrates that to decouple the leaves, pin (13) is moved so that the spherical surface 21 is seated in groove 15.

In contrast to the grooved pin described by DE '006, Morris describes a locking screw (22) that is used to hold the leaves in an assembled condition. Morris describes several modifications to the locking screw, such as the use of a spring clip and a nut. *See e.g.* Column 4, lines 33-56. However, Morris does not suggest that the screw could be replaced by a grooved pin or used in combination with a grooved pin, such as that shown in DE '006. It is submitted that the references teach away from one another since the locking screw described by Morris is incompatible with the grooved pin described by DE '006.

Conclusion

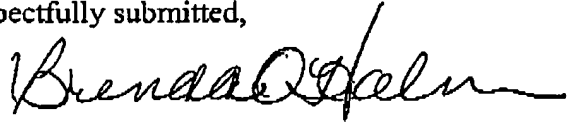
Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing remarks. Applicant further requests that the Examiner call the undersigned attorney if allowance of the claims can be facilitated by a telephone interview.

No additional fees are believed due; however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to

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Deposit Account No. 11-0855.

Respectfully submitted,



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